

Plant Materials Information

1. silver buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus* var. *sericeus*)
2. green thatch palm (*Thrinax radiata*)
3. ocean blue morning glory (*Ipomoea indica* var. *acuminata*)

Conservation message

Silver buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus* var. *sericeus*) gives food and coverage for the wildlife.

500-word Rationale for Plant Selections

We are doing the BGCI and Fairchild Challenge Olympic Wreath Competition that is a massive event. People all over the world are participating in this event. This competition is to show people that we shouldn't kill our plants and that they matter. To make the wreath we have to use at least three different native plants from our area to show the importance of them. Three native plants we used for our wreath are silver buttonwood, ocean blue morning glory's, and green thatch palm berries.

Next, the silver buttonwood, also known as *Conocarpus erectus* var. *sericeus* was used for the base of the wreath. I choose the silver buttonwood because of the color and textures of it. This plant is an occasional larval host plant for martial hairstreak butterflies and tantalus moths. It's also a nectar plant for amethyst hairstreak and other butterflies. Buttonwood is one of the most important host trees for epiphytes in South Florida. This plant gives food and coverage for the wildlife. This plant makes a great base for the wreath because the branches weren't too stiff, so when I bent it, it didn't break. It also wasn't too weak, where it wouldn't support anything that was added to it.

The second thing added to the wreath was green thatch palm berries. Originally I was going to use Bahama night shade berries, which were orange and red, but when I saw the thatch palm berries that were white I thought they looked much better with the silver leaves. Another name for thatch palm tree is *Thrinax radiata* *Arecaceae*. Just like the silver buttonwood the green thatch palm also give food and coverage for wildlife. It also is the larval host plant for *Asbolis capucinus* butterflies. The thatch palm berries are an elegant white. This lovely plant is on the endangered list of the Florida Keys.

The last thing added to the wreath was an ocean blue morning glory. The vines from the morning glories were used to tie the whole wreath together. One morning glory flower was added to the wreath. The colors of the flower really made the wreath stand out. The ocean blue morning glories are great for our community because they are the nectar plants for the monk skipper, mangrove skipper, Brazilian skipper, and many other butterflies. Not only is there purple and pink morning glories, there's also a white version of the flower in the Florida Keys. The scientific name for the ocean blue morning glory is the *Ipomoea indica* var. *acuminata* *Convolvulaceae*.

All of the plants used in the wreath are cultivated, giving some type of wildlife food or coverage. Building this wreath made me think of all the plants that help our environment. It's important to inform people about what these plants do and how they help our community. The BGCI and Fairchild Challenge Olympic Wreath Competition shows the importance of plants from all around the world. I'm so glad our class got to participate in this event. It taught us amazing facts and things about these plants I've never known before. If these plants were no longer a part of our community the animals would be driven away.